

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed November 4, 2005. Claims 1-16 have been amended and new claim 17 has been added without adding new matter. Reconsideration of the pending claims is requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 9, 11-13, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ikeda et al., JP2001-199511 ("Ikeda") (translation provided by the Examiner). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a management system comprising a "reference transmission section for transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact electronic tag." For example, the specification discloses that in the radio frequency tag 30, "area data stored in each area is also used as a time slot for determining the response timing of the transmission timing of a response signal." Specification, page 24, lines 19-21. The claimed invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments.

Ikeda's disclosure does not teach this feature, and thus Ikeda fails to teach or suggest this limitation. For at least this reason, amended claim 1 is allowable over Ikeda.

Moreover, amended claim 1 recites that the "reference transmission section transmits information, which specifies a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, to the noncontact electronic tag." According to amended claim 1, the "noncontact electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of the predetermined data."

Ikeda fails to teach or suggest this limitation, and this is an additional reason why amended claim 1 is allowable over Ikeda. Claims 4-6 depend from claim 1 and contain every limitation of claim 1. Claims 4-6 should be allowed based on the reasons for allowance of claim 1, and also because the unique combinations recited in the dependent claims are neither taught nor suggested by Ikeda.

Claim 8 recites a “noncontact electronic tag storing inhibition detection-possible data indicating permission or inhibition of passage through a passage section as an application family identifier.” Claim 8 has been amended to recite that the “application family identifier comprises lending processing data and return processing data.” This feature of the invention is described and illustrated, for example, on pages 22-24, and Figures 6A-6D of the specification.

Ikeda discloses a system with a “reader/writer 18b ... which shows the lending-out state in the radio tag.” However, Ikeda fails to teach or suggest a “tag storing ... lending processing data and return processing data.” For at least this reason amended claim 8 distinguishes over Ikeda.

Claim 9 has been amended to recite a method comprising “transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact electronic tag.” Amended claim 9 also recites that the “transmitted information specifies a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, so that the noncontact electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of the predetermined data.”

For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, amended claim 9 is allowable over Ikeda. Claims 11 and 12 depend from claim 9 and should be allowed at least for the same reasons their base claim is allowable.

Claim 13 has been amended to recite a "computer-readable medium storing instructions ..., said instructions comprising: ... transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact electronic tag." Amended claim 13 also recites that the "transmitted information specifies a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, so that the noncontact electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of the predetermined data."

For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, amended claim 13 is allowable over Ikeda. Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 13 and should be allowed at least for the same reasons their base claim is allowable.

Claims 2, 7, 10 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikeda in view of Reis et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,973,613 ("Reis"). Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 7 depend from claim 1, claim 10 depends from claim 9, and claim 14 depends from claim 13. As discussed above, claims 1, 9 and 13 are allowable over Ikeda, and Reis adds nothing to remedy Ikeda's deficiencies with respect to claims 1, 9 and 13. Reis teaches a pager device 102 that "delays transmission of a reply signal a random time period after receipt of such timing mark." Col. 9, ll. 39-41. However, Reis fails to teach or suggest "transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag ..., to the noncontact electronic tag," as recited in claims 1, 9 and 13. Thus, Ikeda and Reis, even if properly

combinable, fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1, 9 and 13. Claims 2, 7, 10 and 14 should be allowed based at least on the reasons for allowance of their base claims. Moreover, the references are not properly combinable as asserted in the Office Action, and this is another reason for allowance of claims 2, 7, 10 and 14.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. New claim 17 has been added, incorporating the limitations of pre-amended claims 3, its base claim 1 and intervening claim 2. Thus, new claim 17 is believed to be in condition for allowance. In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe all of the claims in the pending application are in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Thomas J. D'Amico

Registration No.: 28,371

Peter A. Veytsman

Registration No.: 45,920

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &

OSHINSKY LLP

2101 L Street NW

Washington, DC 20037-1526

(202) 785-9700

Attorneys for Applicant